

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated February 10, 2005, the Examiner indicated that Figures 3 and 4 should be designated as "Prior Art". The Examiner also indicated that the following corrections to the disclosure of the specification were required:

Delete "according to the invention recited in claim 19" (line 13, page 14) and delete "in the lamp driving method according to claim 1," (line 14, page 14). The Examiner allowed claims 1-16, rejected claims 17 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Suzuki (JP 2001-239879) and also by Fushimi et al. ("Fushimi") (US Patent No. 6,566,816); and indicated that claims 18-20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this Reply, according to the Examiner's suggestion, Applicants have amended Figures 3 and 4 to indicate them as "Prior Art". Applicants have also, as per the Examiner's suggestion, deleted "according to the invention recited in claim 19" and "in the lamp driving method according to claim 1," from lines 13 and 14 of page 14 of the disclosure respectively. In addition, Applicants have amended claim 17 and cancelled claim 18.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Suzuki and Fushimi because Suzuki and Fashimi fail to disclose every claim element. For example, independent claim 17 recites a combination of steps including *inter alia* "monitoring the shift of the voltage to be applied to the first lamp and the second lamp." Suzuki and Fashimi fail to disclose at least these elements.

In the Office Action the Examiner maintained that both Suzuki and Fushimi disclose a method of providing a plurality of sets of lamps, each having at least a first lamp and a second lamp; and applying a voltage via a controller to a first lamp and a second lamp with a shift of a prescribed time. (See Rejection, page 3). However neither Suzuki nor Fushimi discloses "monitoring the shift of the voltage to be applied to the first lamp and the second lamp," in combination with the other steps defined in claim 17.

Because Suzuki and Fushimi fail to disclose every claim element, the Section 102(b) rejection of independent claim 17 should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 19-21 ultimately depend on claim 17 and, therefore, are allowable for at least the reasons discussed above and in view of their additional recitations of novelty.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and reexamination of this application and timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response, and charge any required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: May 10, 2005

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